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The view from SERA in Scotland

By Stephen McKinney

I commence by recognising the excellent leadership of the two previous Presidents, Dr. George Head and Dr. Laura Colucci-Gray and the unwavering support provided by the vice president, Dr. Stephen Day. Further, SERA has been fortunate that the members of the Executive are very willing to work hard and contribute to the activities of SERA. SERA has operated over the last few years within the unsettling contexts of Indyref and Brexit. We have been anxious that these have not distracted us from the other major issues that have had an impact on education. As an Executive, we have frequently discussed the limitations of the human and financial capacity that is available to us and we have made collective decisions to focus our energies on a number of initiatives and activities. I wish to highlight four themes: networks; early career researchers; links with external bodies and conferences. Over the last four years we have revived the SERA networks. The networks are focused on a major national and international topic in education, and provide an interface between academic research and policy makers, practitioners, school leaders and other relevant parties. All of the networks are active throughout the year and bring together very diverse groups of people. The Scottish Physical Education Network and the Leadership in Scottish Education Network have arranged a series of very well attended and well received seminars and workshops. The Poverty and Education Network organised a joint seminar with the BERA Research Commission on Poverty and Policy Advocacy. The Early Years Network is recommencing activities. SERA has consolidated existing links with national and international partners and has established or re-established relationships with other parties. The increasingly close cooperation between SERA and BERA has been very fruitful. The SERA Executive has remained committed to supporting early career researchers. We have recently established an Emerging Researchers Network and there is a longer standing, and very active, SERA Research Students' Network which has organized a number of highly successful BERA-SERA postgraduate research events. The final theme is conferences. The conference continues to be a major highlight of the year and the conferences during my time as President have continued to expand the modes of delivery (including paper, symposium, workshop, roundtable, three-minute thesis, Pecha Kucha) and the international dimension of the conference. We continue to attract participants from a wide variety of countries. In the last few years we have introduced a session for newly qualified teachers on the last day of the conference and this has proved to be highly successful. All of the activities that have been outlined above require strategic vision and operation but also dedication and commitment from the SERA Executive and SERA members to ensure their continued success.

Professor Stephen McKinney was President of SERA 2016-2017 and is based in the School of Education, University of Glasgow.